

THE SUBSTANCE OF FOUR SERMONS

ON

INFANT BAPTISM,

BY

REV. A. A. HODGE,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

FREDERICKSBURG, VA.

UG
22
ZP
Box 1
no. 12

IBR

FREDERICKSBURG:
RECODER JOB OFFICE.

1857.

THE LIBRARY
Union Theological Seminary
RICHMOND, VA.

THE SUBSTANCE OF FOUR SERMONS

ON

INFANT BAPTISM,

BY

REV. A. A. HODGE,

PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

FREDERICKSBURG, VA.

FREDERICKSBURG:

RECODER JOB OFFICE.

1857.

TO THE PEDO-BAPTISTS OF FREDERICKSBURG.

Very recently, in the ordinary course of pastoral duty, the writer preached a series of sermons in the Presbyterian Church in Fredericksburg, on the subject of Infant Baptism, exhibiting the scriptural evidence of the perpetual obligation and privilege of this ordinance and unfolding the significance of this rite, as applied to infants, together with the nature and benefits of infant church membership. He does not claim originality for anything these sermons contain, nor to have added a ray of light to the general controversy, but only to have restated truth as old as Christ's Church. Nor has he scrupled to use *ad libitum*, and in every way the arguments of his revered friend Dr. George D. Armstrong of Norfolk, Va., whom many of you admiringly remember, as one of the Christian heroes of the pestilence of 1855.

The sermons embraced in these sheets were not designed by the writer, for publication, but only for the instruction of his own people, and are not now printed for general circulation, but for the Pedo-baptists of this town and its immediate vicinity, with the belief that they will be more likely to read and learn from a pamphlet thrown out extemporaneously from one in their midst, than from the many better books they might obtain.

In the outset all intention to provoke controversy, or injure the feelings of others, is distinctly disclaimed, the only motive being to give to the Pedo-baptists, who may read this pamphlet, light upon the scriptural principles and evidences of the doctrine they believe and obey, to stimulate them to grateful recognition of its privileges and to earnest prayerful performance of the duties it enforces. This pamphlet, as printed, consists of the sermons as written, except in the rearrangement of paragraphs, and the omission of some recapitulatory passages.

While it is true, that, controversy was not, and is not desired, the arguments could not be restricted to one side of the subject, consistently with its proper elucidation.

Apologizing to the reader for the length of these prefatory remarks, the writer would now conclude, with the excellent words of Holy Writ with which Dr. A. Carson concludes his work on the same subject, happy to be able cordially to unite with him, in the sentiments they contain. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. This is the love of God that ye keep his commandments. Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say."

INFANT BAPTISM.

GEN. 17: 7. And I will accomplish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.

GAL. 3: 29. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

It is my purpose, depending upon the assistance of the Holy Ghost, to lay open, in a series of discourses, the whole scriptural ground upon which infant baptism rests, and to discuss and illustrate the true relation which the baptized children of believers sustain to the church. No one can for a moment doubt that these subjects are of the utmost practical importance. It is not a spirit of theological or denominational bigotry which prompts me to occupy your attention with these questions. They bear directly upon our dearest interests and our constant and most imperative duties. They relate to radical principles which underlie the very foundations of the visible Church, and are questions which the word of God settles as plainly and as finally, as any other truths of revealed religion. It is evidently the duty of all to study earnestly, to seek to understand clearly, what God's revealed will on this important subject is—and then woe to us, if we fail honestly to obey his word.

If God purposes to provide salvation for sinful man, at all, and to institute, as a means to that end, a divine kingdom, or church on earth, it is certainly reasonable for us to expect before hand, that he would adapt that salvation to man's actual condition; and that he would constitute his church upon the same fundamental principles, upon which, at the creation, he himself constituted all human society. If man had been created, and was designed to exist as an isolated individual, then, salvation and gospel ordinances would doubtless be adapted to individuals as isolated unities. Or if the human race was constituted on the same principle as the social polity of the angels, each creature separately a matured adult from the first, doubtless the salvation of Christ and the constitution of the Church would have been exactly adapted to such a society. A reference to the fundamental and characteristic principles of human association, in contrast with that of angels, will help us to understand more clearly the constitution of the Church as it is exhibi-

ted in the scriptures—and will lead us to see and admire the wonderful harmony which prevails through all God's works.

Each angel was brought into being by a distinct act of creation. They may possess like nature, but they cannot be said to possess the same nature, for they have proceeded not one from the other, but each immediately from God. The scriptural account leads us to believe that each angel was brought into existence in the complete maturity of all his powers, and that each in his own person stood his own probationary trial. There is no race of angels, no family of angels, no representative head of angels, as there is a race, a family, a representative head uniting in one, all human life. Each angel stood or fell by himself. The Son of God never could have allied himself to them, as he has allied himself to us. He might have become one *like* them; he never could have become one *of* them; for there is no angelic race of parent and child into which he could have been born.

On the contrary, God created but one human pair, from whose blood and life all other human beings have sprung by generation; and so he has in the strictest sense made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth. Mankind was at the first introduced on the globe not as separate individuals, but, in families—the husband and the wife one flesh, and the children in the parents. The family, and not individual man, is the unit out of which, by combination civil government grows. The State consists of associated families; and just so does the Church of Christ as a visible kingdom in the world. The nationality, the freedom, the state-rights of the child are all determined by the standing of the parent. In the very formation of his being, the child derives from his parent, his physical, intellectual, and moral constitutional characteristics; and after that, the parental example, and all the influences of the family form the mould into which the infant's character is cast, and from which, all his faculties take their peculiar turn of development. It is not therefore something simply revealed in the Bible, and first exhibited in the constitution of the Christian Church, but it is a universal principle alike of human nature, and of divine providence, that the child receives his position and outward treatment, and is determined in the first development of its inward moral character by the position and character of the parent.

This is a more profound and far-reaching principle of human society than we can adequately estimate. The results are every where standing about us in gigantic forms, while we are so familiar with them, that they appear to us mere matters of course, which we fail to attribute to their true causes. What is the origin of this wonderful phenomenon, permanent distinctions of race in the human family, originally one blood? Whence come the wide differ-

ences between the European, the African, the Chinese, the Indian? Whence these marked and permanent differences between the Celt, the Saxon and the Slavonian? What is national character, fixing forever the style and the destiny of Englishmen on the one hand, and the style and destiny of Frenchmen so widely different, on the other? What are all these but efforts on a wide scale of this universal principle of all God's dealing with men, alike in providence and in grace—the character of the child moulded by that of the parent, the child treated with favor or disfavour, according to the standing of the parent before God. Remember that I affirm this, as a general principle, and therefore its operation is best illustrated upon a wide scale. When we come to particular instances, we will of course find this principle modified by many other principles of equal authority, and we will of consequence observe innumerable individual exceptions. And yet, in spite of all modifying influences, this principle is universally recognized and counted upon by all men in its operation in families as well as in races. Every individual of us is a subject of its operation, a monument of its power.

Since the above was first written and delivered, I have met with the following eloquent statement of the same truth, in the last work of the illustrious and lamented Hugh Miller. I quote it, to prove that, the views which I present, are the result of universal science, as much as of Pedo-Baptist interpretation of scripture. Speaking of the unity of the human race, and of the formation of different races, he says:

"For whatever we may think of the scriptural doctrine on this special head, it is a fact broad and palpable in the economy of nature, that parents do occupy a federal position; and that the lapsed progenitors, when cut off from civilization, and all external interference of a missionary character, become the founders of a lapsed race. The iniquities of the parents are visited upon the children. In all such instances it is man left to the freedom of his own will, that is the deteriorator of man. The doctrine of the Fall in its purely theologic aspect, is a doctrine which must be apprehended by faith; but it is at least something to find that the analogies of science, instead of running counter to it, run in exactly the same line. It is one of the inevitable consequences of that nature of man which the Creator 'bound fast in fate,' while he left free his will, that the free will of the parent should become the destiny of the child."

And this federal principle, the treating with parents as the responsible representatives of their children, and the treating with children on the basis of the character and standing before God of their parents, runs through the whole scriptures. Adam stood his

momentous probation as the representative of the whole human family ; and from that day to this, his descendants have been experiencing what it is, to occupy a position, of sin and misery, made for them by their first parent. The same principle is announced again in the covenant God formed with Noah, declaring " I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in all their generations." And from the awful brow of Sinai, Jehovah distinctly promulgated this principle, as the universal rule of his dealings with men. " For I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

If God formed men in families, as the natural and essential condition of man at his creation ; if civil communities consist of associated families ; if, in their wanderings from God, parents by a universal law carry their children with them further from the circle of his favour and the hope of return ; Is it not reasonable to expect that when, in introducing a remedial scheme of salvation, God instituted a visible kingdom, or church in the world, he would found that kingdom on the same general principles ? Is it not probable that this church shall consist of families ? If it is a universal law of *nature*, that parents in their wanderings carry their children further from God's favour with themselves—is it not antecedently probable that, it shall also be a law of *grace*, that parents, as they approach nearer to God through faith shall bring their children with them nearer to the promises and influences of salvation ? To the eye of the unprejudiced philosopher scanning the analogies of universal providence—to the genuine instincts of the heart of every unsophisticated parent, it would be beyond all peradventure probable, even before the the testimony of God's word is examined. And now turning to exhibit the clear testimony of that word, on this subject, our hearts kindle within us in admiration and love, while we read the evidence that in all the precious benefits and privileges of his house, our Father has made provision for our children also.

The visible Church of which Infants are members—What is it ?

The Church of Christ, in the widest sense of that term, is the entire body of his redeemed and sanctified people of all ages and nations, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the fullness of Him, that filleth all in all. This is the Church, as it is embraced in the decree of election, and as it will exist at last in New Jerusalem above. Every human being, whether infant or adult, who by the power of the Holy Ghost, has been made a participant in the justification and sanctification of the Gospel, is truly a member of that Church,

whether he ever received the ordinances of the visible church or not, because these outward ordinances, however profitable, are obviously not essential to salvation.

But in order to give visibility to this spiritual church, and to enable it to fulfill its great function as ministerially a self-propagating, self-extending body, the great Head has ordained, that, his people shall, on the basis of a special organic law to that effect, organize themselves into societies, with officers, laws and ordinances. These constitute separately visible churches, and in the aggregate of all together the visible church universal. This church is called visible, not merely because it consists of men and women, whose inward faith produces visible works, but also because it is visible as a society, organized on the basis of Christ's law, and to accomplish the ends of his Kingdom.

The definition given in the 25th ch. of the Westminster Confession of Faith, reads, " The visible church, which is also Catholic, or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation as before under the law,) consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children ; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no *ordinary* possibility of salvation." In practice under the human administration of this church, great laxity has often prevailed as to the interpretation of what is implied in a credible profession. Yet the essential conditions of a true church are, that a profession should be made of the fundamental doctrines of the true religion, and that the society should be organized in subjection to Christ as the great Head of the Church Universal, and to subserve the ends of his kingdom. And be it remembered, as a matter of fact, that all such churches, with the modern and relatively inconsiderable exception of the deniers of Infant Baptism, from the beginning, have recognized the infants of such professors of the truth, as legitimate members. Read on for the proof.

This visible church rests ultimately, of course, upon the Covenant of Grace formed eternally between the Father and the Son. It is an administrative provision formed for the purpose of carrying out and realizing instrumentally the blessings of that covenant. For this purpose the visible church has always existed from the Fall. But more specifically, in its matured public form, the visible church rests upon the Covenant, which God made with Abraham. That Covenant which God made with Abraham also evidently sustains the relation to the fundamental Covenant of Grace, of an administrative provision intended to carry out practically in one department its most gracious designs. This administrative covenant provides the means whereby the glorious provisions of the Covenant of Grace are to be instrumentally realized—and it pledges

the blessings of the Covenant of Grace to all the members of the visible church, not absolutely, but on the condition of faith. They are not all Israel who are of Israel, only they who, truly believe, reap all the benefits. Yet in this Church the blessings of the Covenant are brought near and administered, in good faith offered, and are forfeited only by willful rejection.

Both sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper "are holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm our interests in him." The *grace* therefore represented by these sacraments, is the common inheritance of all the members of the universal spiritual church invisible, whether they have belonged to the visible church or not—but the *sacraments* themselves, as *visible signs or symbols*, evidently belong alone to the visible church, as an organized body, designed to carry out the provisions of the Covenant of Grace. They are visible signs, sealing the promise of the provisions of Grace, on the condition of our faith. Symbolizing the benefits of Christ's redemption, they signify God's willingness to apply them to us, if we only believe. They seal also our personal consecration to the Lord's service, and consequent obligation to believe and obey; and are consequently visible badges or signs of our citizenship in the visible church, the community of God's covenanted people. To this church are peculiar promises; in it are peculiar advantages, resting upon it are peculiar obligations. All of these are represented and sealed by the sacraments. And therefore these sacraments are at once "holy signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace," and at the same time marks and badges of membership in the visible church, "to put a visible difference between those that belong to the church, and the rest of the world, and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to his word."

The design of this visible Church, is to carry out and realize instrumentally, the design of the Covenant of Grace. To it from of old, were committed the oracles of God. To it pertained, under one dispensation, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises and the fathers, and of it as concerning the flesh Christ came. And to it pertaineth evermore, Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists, pastors and teachers, the preached gospel, the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, domestic training, the family altar, the Sabbath school, the baptismal font, the communion table, mutual counsel, prayer and public discipline—and all for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

The proper growth of this Church, was to be in two directions—the one inward, in the perfecting of its actual members in the di-

vine life—the other outward, in the gradual conversion of the world; the gathering those into the fold, who by birth are "strangers to the Commonwealth of Israel." The first, or inward work, is represented in one parable by the leaven which was to work throughout, until the whole mass was leavened. The other, or outward growth of the Church is represented in another parable by the mustard seed, which being the smallest of seeds, grew until the fowls of heaven came and found shelter in its wide-spread branches. In its outward growth, the Church is to disciple individuals and nations; then to baptize them, thus bringing them within the fold; then to teach them, all doctrines, ordinances and duties, which the great Head has commanded. [See Matt. 28: 19 and 20.] In its inward growth, the Church is by teaching, ordinances, prayer, private counsel, example and discipline, to foster the religious life of her members, under the promises and peculiar blessings of their covenanted relation to God. This view is implied in all the teachings of the Bible with reference to the visible Church. This Church is accordingly represented as a flock, the sheep with the lambs, with under-shepherd's delegated to feed and guide them. And again, as a garden upon a fruitful hill, walled and hedged about, and planted with the choicest vines, and tilled by many under gardeners. Again, as seed sown in a field, where tares grow together with wheat, until the harvest; the fig-tree for many years barren, is still digged about and dunged, if by any means it may be made to bear fruit at last. The young scions as they successively shoot from the parent stock, are sedulously nurtured and trained, that they may bloom early and bear fruit richly. The branches that bear fruit are pruned, that they may bear more fruit, while those that will not bear at all, must as the last resource, be cut off. Thus we see that while the visible church is a witnessing body, holding up the testimony of Jesus crucified before the world; and a militant body carrying the war into the enemies country, and rescuing his subjects from cruel bondage; it is also a nursery into which children are born, and a school in which they are reared for Christ, under all the advantages of their birth-right within the Covenant.

This visible Church or kingdom of God in the world, whose purpose is to work out instrumentally the ends of the Covenant of Grace, has always existed in some form from the fall, as an essential part of the Mediatorial administration of Christ. And as the scripture history shows us that there has been a gradual development, through several successive stages, of the plan of salvation; from the promise to Eve in the Garden, immediately after the Fall, up to the actual coming of Christ in the flesh and out-pouring of the Holy Ghost; so the same history discovers to us an exactly

VI. And finally, that *from the beginning*, the immeasurable majority of God's people, of all ages and nations, have held to the truth of this federal constitution of the church, and have practiced infant baptism. And

I. The covenant made by God with Abraham, which embraced the child with the parent, is the charter of the visible church, and holds in full force to this day, under the present dispensation.

GEN. 17: 4-8. "As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father for many nations; neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

GEN. 22: 18. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Now it is evident, that in regard to *certain temporal circumstances*, this Abrahamic covenant had special reference to the Jewish nation, and the land of Canaan. The visible church was then brought into intimate connection with outward circumstances, not essential to its own constitution. The visible church was then temporarily bound up with a civil polity, and confined to a limited consecrated territory. Spiritual things were then symbolically shadowed forth by visible and temporal places, persons and things. Every thing that was spiritual was mixed in that which was outward, and every outward thing shadowed forth that which was spiritual and permanent. But does it hence follow that the spiritual and the permanent was not really present, because this Abrahamic covenant had special reference to the Jewish nation and the land of Canaan? Does it follow that it is not the permanent charter of the visible church of Christ under all dispensations alike? The man who decides so, *charges the Holy Ghost with a mistake*. This is not a matter of opinion—God has clearly expounded this constitutional charter of his church by his own inspired commentary. We wish no controversy with those who deny it—let them settle it with God.

That Abraham did not receive it in the narrow sense of a temporal promise of the land of Canaan, is settled once for all by Paul in the 11th chapter of Hebrews. "Abraham having seen the promises afar off, was persuaded of them, and confessed that

he was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, and desired a better country that is a heavenly; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"—(See the whole passage in connection.) In the 4th ch. Rom's and the 3d ch. of Gal. Paul argues at great length, to prove that this covenant made with Abraham is the charter of the church, and perpetual. When God made it, he declared it to be an EVERLASTING COVENANT. Paul says that the tabernacle and the ceremonial service four hundred and thirty years after the Abrahamic church, were temporary, designed to preserve the shadow until the substance of the "good things" had come. "But the law," he argues, "which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul that it should make the promise of none effect." The tabernacle and the temple, the altar, the priest and the sacrifice, have all passed away, but the covenant of God with Abraham, which guarantees infant church membership, still stands everlasting. In the 17th v. Paul says that this "covenant was confirmed before of God in Christ." In the 8th verse he says that it was the very essence of the gospel. "The scriptures preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed." This covenant was made with Abraham as the father of many nations; as the heir of the world. Paul says in Rom. 4: 13, that this promise "was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Verse 16—that this "promise is sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham." That this promise, consequently, of being the heir of the world, is fulfilled in his being "the father of us all" who believe. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This, assuredly, settles the question. To be Christ's is to be embraced in this covenant of Abraham. The covenant is sure to us—by faith we have inherited it. Our children have as much right in the church as Abraham's Ishmael or Isaac ever had.

And Peter, in the first great sermon of the new dispensation, on the day of Pentecost, while preaching to the people that they must repent and be baptized, gives them this remarkable reason why they must be baptized. "For the promise," which (the connection abundantly proves,) is the Abrahamic promise or covenant, "is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call."

II. Circumcision, the visible sign and seal of the Abrahamic covenant, is precisely represented now by baptism, which occupies the same place, symbolizes the same grace, and seals the same promises.

Circumcision may be viewed, and is viewed, in the Bible, in two

distinct aspects. 1st. As an *opus operatum*, a mere rite. Of it in this sense, Paul says, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." The same is true of baptism—baptism in itself, as a mere rite availeth nothing, neither is the want of it inconsistent with salvation, if the grace represented by it is possessed. 2d. It is represented as a seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed. It represented all the blessings secured by that covenant. That covenant embraced the church, and the church then existed in the outward form of a separate nation. It had its civil and temporal aspect and blessings, and at the same time, as I have proved, its spiritual and permanent aspect and blessings. The sign and seal of the covenant circumcision, therefore, had its double aspect likewise. It was to the Jew the badge of his nationality and the seal of Jehovah's promise of civil and temporal blessings to his race. But does it hence follow, that it did not fill the place precisely, as the seal of the spiritual covenant, which baptism now occupies, or that it did not signify precisely the same grace? The man that so judges, charges the Holy Ghost with mistake.

That from the beginning, circumcision was intended to symbolize spiritual truths, is declared in Deut. 10: 16: "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff-necked." And in Deut. 30: 6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

The New Testament says nothing about baptism, which it does not in turn say about circumcision. They occupy the same place through two successive periods of time, as symbols of the same truths, and seals of the same covenant. Circumcision was the rite by which new members were initiated into the church. Baptism is the rite by which new members are initiated into the church. Circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith. Baptism is the seal of the righteousness of faith. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant made with Abraham. For God said, "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Baptism is the sign of the covenant made with Abraham. For Paul said, Galatians 3: 27, 29: "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Baptism represents the washing away of sin. Circumcision represented the cleansing from sin. For God said: "I will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord with all thy soul, &c." Baptism represents an inward spiritual grace. Circumcision repres-

ted an inward spiritual grace. "For he is not Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which was outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter whose praise is not of men but of God"—Rom. 2: 28, 29. By baptism we are united to Christ, and partake of his new life, and its fruits unto holiness. By circumcision believers were united to Christ and partook of his new life and its fruits unto holiness. For Paul says in Col. 2: 10 and 11: "In whom," Christ, head of all principality and power, "ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

In the case of circumcision, precisely as in that of baptism, adults were required to exercise faith before they received that outward rite, which was the seal of faith. Abraham believed before he was circumcised; and his circumcision was the seal of his faith, which he had, while he was yet uncircumcised. Adult proselytes from the Gentiles were required to believe before they were circumcised. And yet it is beyond controversy that God commanded that infants should receive the seal before they could exercise the faith.

When the symbolical service of the temple was done away, and when circumcision as the seal of the permanent covenant was superseded by baptism, it ceased to be a divine ordinance, and became a mere ceremony, indifferent or injurious, according to the interpretation put upon it by those still continuing to use it. The prejudices and the national and religious associations of both the spiritual and the fanatical Jew, alike, naturally clung to its observance. In the case of the spiritually enlightened Jewish christian, baptism was received as the now divinely appointed seal of the spiritual covenant, while circumcision sank into a mere national badge. Therefore, on one occasion Paul, the free, clear-headed Apostle of the Gentiles, consented to circumcise Timothy, Acts 16: 3, in that spirit of accommodation to the innocent prejudices of his weak brethren, which always characterized him. But the fanatical Jews, who remained at heart Pharisees, while they bore the name of christians, were going about through all the churches saying, "except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved"—Acts 15 vs. 1, 5, 24. In this perverted view, circumcision was apostacy from Christ. Circumcision as God ordained it, and during the time for which he ordained it, was precisely what baptism is now. But circumcision, or baptism, or any other rite, at a time when not commanded by God, and associated with the ceremonial system of Moses as the essential condition of salvation, would become an antichrist, by occupying the

distinct aspects. 1st. As an *opus operatum*, a mere rite. Of it in this sense, Paul says, "neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." The same is true of baptism—baptism in itself, as a mere rite availeth nothing, neither is the want of it inconsistent with salvation, if the grace represented by it is possessed. 2d. It is represented as a seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed. It represented all the blessings secured by that covenant. That covenant embraced the church, and the church then existed in the outward form of a separate nation. It had its civil and temporal aspect and blessings, and at the same time, as I have proved, its spiritual and permanent aspect and blessings. The sign and seal of the covenant circumcision, therefore, had its double aspect likewise. It was to the Jew the badge of his nationality and the seal of Jehovah's promise of civil and temporal blessings to his race. But does it hence follow, that it did not fill the place precisely, as the seal of the spiritual covenant, which baptism now occupies, or that it did not signify precisely the same grace? The man that so judges, charges the Holy Ghost with mistake.

That from the beginning, circumcision was intended to symbolize spiritual truths, is declared in Deut. 10: 16: "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff-necked." And in Deut. 30: 6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

The New Testament says nothing about baptism, which it does not in turn say about circumcision. They occupy the same place through two successive periods of time, as symbols of the same truths, and seals of the same covenant. Circumcision was the rite by which new members were initiated into the church. Baptism is the rite by which new members are initiated into the church. Circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith. Baptism is the seal of the righteousness of faith. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant made with Abraham. For God said, "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Baptism is the sign of the covenant made with Abraham. For Paul said, Galatians 3: 27, 29: "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Baptism represents the washing away of sin. Circumcision represented the cleansing from sin. For God said: "I will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord with all thy soul, &c." Baptism represents an inward spiritual grace. Circumcision repres-

ted an inward spiritual grace. "For he is not Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which was outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter whose praise is not of men but of God"—Rom. 2: 28, 29. By baptism we are united to Christ, and partake of his new life, and its fruits unto holiness. By circumcision believers were united to Christ and partook of his new life and its fruits unto holiness. For Paul says in Col. 2: 10 and 11: "In whom," Christ, head of all principality and power, "ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

In the case of circumcision, precisely as in that of baptism, adults were required to exercise faith before they received that outward rite, which was the seal of faith. Abraham believed before he was circumcised; and his circumcision was the seal of his faith, which he had, while he was yet uncircumcised. Adult proselytes from the Gentiles were required to believe before they were circumcised. And yet it is beyond controversy that God commanded that infants should receive the seal before they could exercise the faith.

When the symbolical service of the temple was done away, and when circumcision as the seal of the permanent covenant was superseded by baptism, it ceased to be a divine ordinance, and became a mere ceremony, indifferent or injurious, according to the interpretation put upon it by those still continuing to use it. The prejudices and the national and religious associations of both the spiritual and the fanatical Jew, alike, naturally clung to its observance. In the case of the spiritually enlightened Jewish christian, baptism was received as the now divinely appointed seal of the spiritual covenant, while circumcision sank into a mere national badge. Therefore, on one occasion Paul, the free, clear-headed Apostle of the Gentiles, consented to circumcise Timothy, Acts 16: 3, in that spirit of accommodation to the innocent prejudices of his weak brethren, which always characterized him. But the fanatical Jews, who remained at heart Pharisees, while they bore the name of christians, were going about through all the churches saying, "except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved"—Acts 15 vs. 1, 5, 24. In this perverted view, circumcision was apostacy from Christ. Circumcision as God ordained it, and during the time for which he ordained it, was precisely what baptism is now. But circumcision, or baptism, or any other rite, at a time when not commanded by God, and associated with the ceremonial system of Moses as the essential condition of salvation, would become an antichrist, by occupying the

place which belongs to Christ alone. Therefore, Paul declared to those Galatians who took this false and wicked view of circumcision and the law of Moses—that if *with such views* they were circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing, for whosoever accepted circumcision and the law of Moses as the foundation of salvation, was a debtor to do the whole law. And therefore when pressed to circumcise Titus, a young Grecian convert, by men who held these distinctive views, Paul refused peremptorily. He gave place to these false brethren, no not for one hour—Gal. 2: 4, 5.

III. The present visible church, of which confessors of Christ are now members, is precisely identical with that visible church of Christ of which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the “Israelites indeed” with their infant seed were members.

1st. It is difficult to understand why so plain a proposition should need any proof—Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth. His is the only name given under Heaven, whereby any man *can* be saved. But men were saved after Adam fell and before Christ came, and therefore they must have been saved by the merits of Christ. Of course God has never had any other way of saving sinners. That church, therefore, must have rested upon Christ. Our church now rests upon Christ. They have, therefore, the same *foundation*—“for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

2d. And in the second place the *conditions of salvation* in the case of adult men and women is the same in both. We shall be saved if we believe in a Christ who has come. They were saved if they believed in a Christ who was to come. Paul in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, repeats and illustrates this truth in every possible way. Justification by faith, is our first great principle. Abraham also believed, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. He is the preeminent example and father of them that believe and are saved through faith. And so it was of Abel and Enoch and Noah and Moses and Gideon and Barach and Sampson and of Jephtha, and of David and of Samuel, and of all the old Testament prophets and saints. Their faith rested on Christ and his atonement—Christ affirmed that “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it in the promise by the eye of faith and was glad.” Their ceremonial services in the Temple all represented Christ—held him up, as in a mirror, before their eyes—and as they saw that reflection of the coming One, they believed and were saved. Their devotional poetry celebrated Him—their scriptures testified of Him. They too, as well as we, worshipped Him as the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. They too, as well as we,

said to one another in tearful gratitude and trusting love, “surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” If the Abrahamic church was not our church, the church of Christ, whose church was it? Its foundation is the same with that upon which our church rests, and the condition, upon which salvation was offered, was precisely the same.

3d. And in the third place, the ancient covenant of promise, which gave form to that church, as an aggregate of families, passes over to the church of the New Testament and still holds good in our behalf—as I have abundantly shown from scripture under a preceding head.

4th. And in the fourth place, it is distinctly declared in many places in the New Testament that the Gentiles have not been built up into a new church, but that they have been taken into that self-same old Abrahamic church of the Jews. Paul tells the Ephesians in the second chapter of his epistle, that they being Gentiles were once uncircumcised; at that time they were without Christ, aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; but that now they who were afar off were brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. He reminds them that the cumbrous ceremonial services, which had stood between Jews and Gentiles as a middle wall of partition, had been broken down; and that barrier having been removed, they are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God. The Jews had been within—the Gentiles had been excluded by the middle wall of partition. That being broken down, the Gentiles were brought in, and made of the same household of faith with the ancient line of Jewish saints.

And again, in the 11th chapter of his epistle to the Roman Gentiles, Paul describes exactly the change which God effected in the church, when he brought in the new dispensation, or new mode of administration, at the advent of Christ. He calls the ancient church of Christ, the good olive tree, of which the Jews were the original branches. Now it is most evident that this *must* refer to the *visible* church of the Jews, of which all possessors were members, and not to the *invisible spiritual* church of which only the truly regenerate were members. Because the majority of the Jews were not members of the invisible church, and therefore could not be cut off—and the few who were true members of the spiritual church certainly could not be cut off for unbelief—on the contrary they were the true believers—and the history proves that they were the very branches of the visible church which were *not* cut off. This “good olive tree,” therefore, was certainly the visible church

of Christ under the Jewish dispensation. Of it circumcision was the badge, and all professing Jews and their infants were members. But the vast majority of these Jewish members rejected Christ, and were, Paul says in this chapter, cut off, because of unbelief, from their own good olive tree, and the Gentiles were grafted in. Yet the olive tree remains the same. Paul says plainly, "It is not the branches which bear the root, but the root the branches." He says that the gentile branches partake of the root and fatness of the old olive tree. They have not a new stock made for them, but are grafted into the old. And in God's time the old Jewish natural branches, if they abide not in unbelief, shall "be grafted back into their old olive tree," side by side with the new gentile grafts. Now, if the visible church did not abide the *very same* from Abraham to us, how could the Gentiles be grafted into the church of the Jews? or how can the Jews in their future conversion to, and profession of Christ, be said to "be grafted back into *their own* tree?"

But this church of the Jews was organized from the beginning essentially upon the federal principle, including always the child with the parent. Paul declares that this church was never changed, only the Jewish branches were cut off for a time, because of unbelief, and the Gentile branches grafted in through faith. Now, we ask, where is the warrant for these Gentile grafts from the wild olive tree, now in the 19th century from Christ, attempting to change the constitution of that ancient Jewish stock, into which their fathers were introduced through the instrumentality of Jewish missionaries?

In these two passages, in two different epistles to Gentile converts, we have Paul's statement and illustration of the doctrine, that the Gentile christians were not built up into a new church, but were gathered into the old Jewish church. Now let us turn to the history of the actual gathering in of the first confessors of Christ crucified, as it is recorded by Luke, and see if the history of facts exactly corresponds to the doctrinal statements of Paul. Surely it would be a miracle without parallel, if a false interpretation could perfectly harmonize a history of actions written by one man, and doctrinal statements and illustrations written by another. That surely must be the truth, to which every word of the entire scriptures is attuned in harmony.

5th. In the fifth place, Luke's historical account of the actual transition of the church from the Old Dispensation to the New shows clearly that the membership and organization of the old church was preserved, and that the converts of the day of Pentecost, and subsequent revivals were not built up into a new church, but were daily added to the old.

The actual point of time at which the old dispensation of promises and of types ceased, and the new dispensation of fulfilment commenced, was the moment when Christ expired upon the cross, and his sacrifice was completed. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, signifying that its symbolical services were abrogated now that the true sacrifice for sins had been once and forever accomplished. Up to this moment, all the Jewish members of this church, whose membership had been sealed by the rite of circumcision, were allowed to retain their outward standing in the church, in order to give them space for repentance, and an opportunity to acknowledge Christ. Every member of the Jewish church who acknowledged Christ before his crucifixion, was allowed to remain permanently within the fold. But every soul who rejected Christ up to that time, was cut off, because of unbelief. Now in Acts 1: 15, Luke affirms that the number of the names of those brethren present in Jerusalem, who had acknowledged Christ before his crucifixion, was about one hundred and twenty.* These one hundred and twenty, including all the Apostles except Paul, never then, or at any other time received christian baptism. Their membership in the church had been sealed by the rite of circumcision at their birth; they were never cut off from the church; they always continued in it; and therefore they never had to be grafted back into it by submitting to the rite of baptism. As soon as Christ died, Luke shows that they began to act as a church, for they were the remnant of the ancient membership preserved by grace to carry on the identity of organization and membership from the old to the new administration. They met and exercised the highest function of a visible church in the election of an Apostle in the place of Judas. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, these hundred and twenty were with one accord, in one place. And those who gladly believed, in consequence of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost that day, were said to be *added* to the already existing church of the 120. All the rest of that great multitude assembled to hear the preaching of Peter had rejected Christ, and therefore had been cut off from the church. Peter distinctly charges this upon them in his sermon: "The God of our fathers hath glorified his son Jesus; whom *ye* delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate; *ye* denied the Holy One and the just, and killed the Prince of Life." All except the one hundred and twenty having been guilty of apostasy.

*There were indeed, many others who believed in Christ before his crucifixion, besides these 120, resident in other parts of the country; as appears from what Paul says, 1 Cor., 16: 6. of the appearance of Christ after his resurrection, to 500 brethren at once. But this of course does not alter the argument. There is no evidence that any who believed in Christ before his crucifixion were baptized after his resurrection.

tacy, had been cut off through unbelief. Their church standing, which had been sealed by circumcision in infancy was forfeited, and therefore when three thousand of them believed at the preaching of Peter, they were grafted back again into the old olive tree from which they had been cut off; by baptism they were *added* to the one hundred and twenty who had never been cut off—who were in the church by circumcision—who never came in by baptism—who preserved and represented the body of the church in their own persons—Luke's word in Acts 2: 41, “And the same day were *added* into them about three thousand souls.” And Acts, 3: 47, “And the Lord *added* to the church daily of such as shall be saved.”

Does not Luke's history of facts agree exactly with Paul's doctrinal statement in his two epistles? Do not both prove beyond question that the one covenanted church has been preserved on the same foundation, with the same privileges unbroken from Abraham to us? Do they not prove that as a matter of fact, circumcision and baptism occupy the same place in their relation to and signification for the church? That the one is precisely the equivalent of the other, so that those whose membership in the church visible was sealed by circumcision, and who were never afterwards judicially cut off—never needed baptism? While the Gentiles, who, by birth were aliens, and Israelites who had been cut off for the sin of rejecting and crucifying Christ, were alike by baptism grafted into the self-same old stock—“*added*” to the already existing church, preserved a remnant through grace. And if the church of Abraham was the church of Christ—if this church by God's command, embraces infants with their parents—if the converts gathered by the Apostles both from among the apostate Jews and alien Gentiles were *added* to that same old infant embracing church of Abraham; had we not better stay ourselves, and gather our infants with us in the same church? The inspired Apostles certainly did not put their converts anywhere else. We are invited to lay aside our *prejudices*, and passing out of this church, now nearly six thousand years old, to come to something certainly newer, and advertised to be better. We shall lay aside our *prejudices* precisely at the time our Master in heaven informs us, that, He has been persuaded to lay aside his *predetermined* principles of organization for his church.

An attentive perusal of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, arranged with Paul's epistles, in the order of dates, would set forth this great truth in the clearest light. So firmly persuaded were the original Apostles, that the church was not changed—that instead of attempting such a radical revolution as that involved in putting infants out of the church, they erred in the opposite extreme of a

minute conservatism. For many years all of them, without exception, continued to observe all the regulations of the ceremonial law of Moses. We have seen that these Jews who believed before the crucifixion were not baptized, because they never went out of the church, and therefore, never had need to come back. This was right; but the Apostles went further, for not one Gentile was added to the church for the first ten years after the day of Pentacost, who was not first required to become fully a Jew. About ten years after that day, Peter was forced against his protest, by the Holy Ghost, to admit Cornelius without first circumcising him; and the gospel was about the same time spread by means of Grecian proselytes in the mixed Jewish and Gentile community of Antioch. Paul, who did not begin to preach until ten years after Pentacost, was the first Apostle who understood that the Gentiles were to be brought into the church without being made Jews. And for this truth he had to contend, as the whole record proves, both with Jewish Christians and Jewish Apostles, during all his life. It was not finally settled, even among the Apostles, until the famous Council held twenty years after the great day of Pentacost. During all these years baptism and circumcision were used together on the same subjects, as a double method of initiation into the same old church. Those who were circumcised were baptized, and those who were baptized were circumcised. I adduce this to prove that the church is the same—that the old Jewish church was never changed. Certainly nothing in action nor in language could prove more clearly than this history does, that in the opinion of the Apostles the church continues one and unbroken.

Now, confessedly, when the new dispensation of this one continuous church was introduced, many services which had previously occupied a large space in the Jewish mind, were abrogated. The question then arises, was not this ordinance of Infant Baptism abrogated also? Now, God is the only one that ever had any authority to abrogate this or any other one of his own ordinances. They every one stand, as a matter of course, until he abrogates them. We might rest the matter here then, and wait until the opponents of Infant Baptism point out the passage in which God does abrogate his own ordinance. The burden of proof plainly rests upon them. But such is the wealth of truth upon our side, and the poverty on theirs, that I will go beyond all the requirements of argument, and prove from the Bible that this ordinance has *not* been abrogated.

Christ said, Matt. 5: 17, 18, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass one jot, or one title, shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be ful-

filled." Now a promise is fulfilled when the thing promised is given. A prophecy is fulfilled when the thing prophesied has come to pass. A type is fulfilled when the antitype, or thing typified has come. The temple service, the whole sacrificial and ceremonial ritual, all, in whole and in detail, typified Christ, were fulfilled in the person and work of Christ, and therefore have necessarily passed away. They were obviously, in their very nature, and confessedly in God's appointment, designed to be temporary.

Circumcision was the symbol of the benefits of Christ's redemption offered and sealed on the condition of faith, to the person circumcised. His particular circumcision was fulfilled when through grace he came to heaven. But the command to circumcise the child born in the house was not symbolical, it was a literal and absolute commandment. When and how has that commandment been so fulfilled, as to lose its binding authority? If not, the heavens and earth shall pass away before this law shall pass.

It is simply absurd to argue, that because the symbolical temple service has been abolished by the Apostles, therefore the fundamental covenant of the church must have been abolished also. The temple services were not essential to the Abrahamic church. The covenant of circumcision was. Paul says that the covenant of circumcision is not abrogated; that it holds good to us; that it is sure to all the seed; that we who believe are the seed, children of Abraham, and heirs of the covenant. And he answers the very point to which we are now speaking, showing that the temporary ceremonial ritual, brought in by Moses four hundred and thirty years after the covenant of circumcision could not disannul that permanent covenant, that it should make it of none effect. Gal. 3: 27, Paul affirms precisely our principle. The covenant of circumcision never has been made of none effect. It still holds in full effect.

Christ's coming put a clear historical Christ in place of a vague prophetic Christ. It broke down the middle wall, and opened the door for all Gentiles, who might each in every place now approach the Father through the Son, without the necessity of coming up to Jerusalem to worship. It widened the church by bringing in the Gentiles, but it did not narrow the church by putting out the children.

IV. Christ did not alter the fundamental law of his church, as including the infant with the parent, in any of his recorded sayings; but he said much that under the circumstances plainly implied that he rejoiced to preserve it in full force.

Remember that believers had enjoyed the precious privilege of bringing their infants immediately within the circle of the covenanted blessings of the visible church, without interruption or ques-

tion, for one thousand nine hundred and thirty years. During all those years they had been grateful for the privilege they already possessed, and they were taught to look hopefully forward to the coming of Christ in the flesh, as a period, when all their church privileges would be wonderfully enlarged and brightened. Burdens were to be removed—glorious light was to be shed upon them—the Holy Spirit was to be poured out—their church was to expand and to gather in the alien nations, and to extend from the river to the ends of the earth. Seven hundred years before, they had been specially told by Isaiah, that when the Messiah should come, "he shall feed the flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Is. 40: 11. If the flock is the church, the lambs must be the children. All the expectations of the Jews had been formed by these experiences, and by these promises. If Christ had intended to falsify these promises by putting children out of the church, surely he must have found it necessary to have expressed his intention, to these Jews, very explicitly. By his silence they *could only* have understood that their children were to stay in the church, as God had covenanted and prophesied over and over again that they should. Will any sane man believe that Christ put children out of their ancient and covenanted birth-right, and yet not one of his words to that effect be preserved on the record? Can any sane man believe that Christ put infants out of the church of which they had been acknowledged members for nineteen hundred and thirty years, since the Jewish period, and yet neither Scribe, Pharisee, Sadducee nor Disciple breathe one word of surprise, protest or question.

Behold then this scene, presented in Matt. 19: 13, 14, 15. See that company of parents, with parents hearts; Jewish parents, with Jewish habits of thought and feeling on this subject; themselves believing in Jesus, looking upon him as the Shepherd of the flock, of whom it was promised that he would gather and carry the lambs. See them carrying their "little children" with yearning hearts to Jesus; circumcised infants members of the church, as from the beginning infants had been members of the church before them. Behold Christ take them up in his arms. Hear him say, "Suffer little children to come unto me," and mark the reason that he gives for their free right of access to him; "for of such," of children like these, "is the kingdom of heaven," the visible church. Now, I ask solemnly, was not this a most remarkable selection of words, if used by a Saviour who designed to be understood by such parents, as changing the law of his church in this aspect, as putting children out of the church? If that was his meaning, it was surely a dark hint.

Again, behold this other scene. Jesus has risen from the sepulchre, and now appears to seven of his disciples engaged in fishing on the shore of Lake Tiberias. Here he converses with Peter for the first time since his dreadful sin of apostacy, in denying his Lord thrice. That Lord now probes his servants heart to see if it has indeed returned to its first love. Thrice Peter had denied him. Thrice his Lord asks him, if he truly loves him. Thrice his Lord restores his commission to him, as an Apostolic Shepherd over the flock. Jesus was himself, Isaiah says, the chief Shepherd, who feeds his flock, and who gathers and carries his lambs. He, now, John 21: 15, 16, 17, charges Peter twice to feed the sheep, and once to feed the *Lambs*, as an under Shepherd. Again, I ask, solemnly, was not this a most remarkable selection of words, if used by this Saviour with the design of being understood by *those* Apostles, that infants were to be put out of the church after he was gone?

In Matt. 28: 19, 20, we have Christ's last words to his disciples. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach (disciple, *matheteusate*) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching (*didaskontes*, *teaching* is here the true translation) them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world, Amen."

Christ had previously sent out his disciples to preach—Matt. 10: 5, 7, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, &c." From John 4: 2, it appears also that the disciples had baptized before the date of this commission in Matt. 28th. Our Saviour now designs in this last commission to confirm those he had previously given, and especially to do away with the limitations, which he had before attached to their work. Heretofore they preached that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Now they are to preach that it has come. Before they have baptized unto repentance. Now they are to baptize into Christ. Before they were sent to the Jews. Now they are to go into all the world. They were to *disciple* all nations, by baptizing and then teaching. The whole history proves that the Apostles, always, as on the day of Pentecost, baptized on the spot, as soon as profession was made of faith in Christ as the Messiah; and that, after that, they *taught* their converts all that Jesus had commanded. The church was therefore a school. The teaching was received after the men were brought into it, not before. Having received all power in heaven and in earth, Christ com-

mands his disciples to bring "*all nations*" into this school, baptizing and teaching them. Now we have honestly thought it difficult to believe, that, the "households" of the early christians should have been without infants, but to believe that "*all nations*" should be without a single infant, we confess, staggers us outright.

Is it after all strange, that the Apostles, the evangelists, the noble army of martyrs, the most holy and spiritual of all ecclesiastical writers—the church of the Eastern Roman Empire—the church of the Western Roman Empire—all the leaders and learned men of the great Reformation—*every* National church which sprang from that movement, should, without one single exception, have judged that our Lord intended by all he said and did to signify that infants were to be retained in all their church privileges to the end? "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing."

V. The Inspired Apostles in their discourses, letters and recorded actions, always assumed the permanence of this grand federal principle of the church, as infant including; they never repealed it—they always acted on it.

The whole of the Acts of the Apostles, and of their Epistles is full of unquestionable evidence, that they recognized the ancient covenant, as holding good under the christian dispensation, that they preserved unchanged the federal constitution of the church, as embracing the child with the parent, and that consistently with their doctrine they habitually baptized by households, wherever there was a household to baptize.

We will turn, in the first place, to those first chapters in Acts, in which the earliest public preaching of the Apostles is recorded; the introduction in act and fact of the new dispensation. Surely nothing can be more certain than if the organic law of the church is to be changed, if the privilege of introducing children into the church in its public organized form, which has been held secure for nineteen hundred and thirty years, is to be reversed; surely in such a case nothing can be more certain than that the Apostles in their first preaching and enlargement of the church, would have asserted, that such a change was God's will. It could not have been a matter of course. Assuredly it *must* have appeared the most unaccountable and revolting change to Jewish Apostles and Jewish converts. If they intended to make it, they must have spoken out boldly, in a manner which could not have been mistaken. Nay, more than that, from all that the scriptures teach us of the obstinacy of the Jewish character, and their disposition to hold to the traditions of their fathers, it is evident that if the Apostles attempted to cast the children out of the ancient birth-right, they

would not only have to speak plainly, but would moreover be exposed to the most violent and protracted opposition; it is evident that if they could bring in this revolution at all, it would only be after many struggles, by force of repeated and clear argument, and by dint of the whole power of their united authority as Apostles. They record at length and repeatedly, the objections made by Jewish opponents and partially enlightened converts, to their doctrines of Sovereign Election—of the free justification of the sinner by the imputation of Christ's Righteousness—of the Resurrection of the Body—of the bringing in of the Gentiles on an equal footing in church standing with the Jews, and of the abrogation of the ceremonial Temple service, brought in by Moses. Fierce opposition was made to these and other points of Apostolic doctrine and discipline. Every one of these questions had to be fought over. With respect to some of them, the Jewish converts would not submit until a general Synod of Apostles and Presbyters was held in Jerusalem, and a general order sent around enforcing, by the highest authority, the obedience of churches. Yet, in the whole New Testament, there is not the shadow of an indication that a single Jew was astonished or dissatisfied at any radical revolution, violating the sanctions of God's covenant—casting out their beloved children from the birth-right they had enjoyed from the beginning.

Is it not too much to ask a man of sense to believe that such a revolution was wrought in opposition to the promises of God, the prophesies of the Messiah, and the ancient customs of the church; wrought by a Jewish Saviour, and he say not one word to that effect, in all his life, but many to the contrary; wrought by Jewish Apostles and they never say one word in favor of such a change, but many which imply that such a change was never made; wrought among a vast Jewish community, who, while they loudly contest every other Apostolic change, submit to this change of the fundamental law itself, and to the destruction of their dearest family rights, without a single complaint? They may continue to ask, but I think the man of sense will not believe it.

Listen, then, to what the Apostles really do say, and observe how directly the truth is opposed to the monstrous supposition discussed above. Remember that the Apostles and the vast multitudes gathered together in Jerusalem on that day of Pentecost were alike Jews; yet, instead of attempting to prepare the minds of their hearers for some great change in the fundamental principles of the church; instead of hinting that the gospel was a new religion, and that they themselves had come to build up a new church, the Apostles explicitly carry back the minds of their hearers to the ancient foundation.

Peter reminds these Jews, that even under the new dispensation, they were still "children of the covenant, which God made with their fathers' saying to Abraham." This was the charter on which they still rested. The Apostles also appeal to the immemorial administration of this charter by their fathers. "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." When they refer to God, they do not use an abstract or general designation, but they refer to him under those old familiar forms and names associated with the covenant. "The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified his son Jesus." Thus we find that at the very time when they must, *if ever*, have introduced this radical revolution, they were on the contrary most anxious to trace back and lay distinctly open the connection of their standing with the ancient covenant, and its holy associations. But the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob founded a church which included children. That very covenant of which Peter expressly declares that they were heirs even under the new dispensation, brought children into the church. The prophets from Samuel and all that followed after, as many as have spoken, all belonged to a church which included children. Certainly no revolutionists ever began their work in such a style. The irresistible impression made by their language is that the ancient church is to remain, and that those present are to carry out the principles of that church, as much after, as before, the coming of Christ.

But Peter declared even still more unmistakably that the church was to remain unchanged even with respect to this very law of infant membership. Peter tells these Jews that they were children of the ancient covenant made with Abraham, just as Paul afterwards told the Gentiles, that if they were Christ's, then they were Abraham's seed and heirs according to this infant including promise. Peter exhorts them to repent and be baptized, and urges this reason: "For the promise" infant including remember, "is to you and your children." For nineteen hundred and thirty years it had been to their fathers and fathers' children. The only change now made, was that in fulfilment of ancient prophesy, the Gentiles were now admitted as fellow heirs with the Jews; and therefore Peter adds, "and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord your God shall call." This expansion was not a change in this covenant; it is on the contrary, its necessary fulfilment, for the covenant itself provided that "Abraham should be the heir of the world."

Peter's argument then is, that instead of this infant including covenant being done away with, it is on the contrary to be fulfilled more strictly in all its provisions than ever before. The covenant is still valid to you Jews—it still holds good for your children, and it is now to hold good to believers and their infants of all nations, even those hitherto afar off. Remember Peter, moved by the Holy Ghost, says in plain words, this infant including covenant is still in full force in behalf of Jew and Gentile, of parent and child. It will be observed that Peter and Pedo Baptists say the same thing precisely.

After churches were planted in different cities and countries, we find the Apostles still recognizing the church membership of children, in their epistles. "In the only two epistles in which Paul specifies separately the different classes of church members, he specifies children among those classes." The epistle to the Ephesians is addressed as a whole to "the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus;" that, to the Colossians, as a whole, is addressed to the "saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse;" and yet, in the fifth and sixth chapters of the one, and in the third chapter of the other, after general instructions addressed to all alike, he specifies three distinct relations, and addresses specific instructions to six classes sustaining those relations; namely, husbands and wives, parents and *children*, masters and servants. Now, as the whole of each of these letters was addressed to the "*saints*" or *consecrated* inhabitants of those two cities, each particular class specified must belong to the general class in which all are contained. This mode of writing was very unnatural, if either of these classes were excluded from the church. These very passages are relied upon, and most justly, by all southern christians to prove that both masters and their slaves were recognized by Paul as members in good standing in the same christian church. But if they prove that, they prove just as clearly that children were church members also. But this mode of writing was most natural, if as I have proved, God constituted his church of christian families, just as he has constituted nations of families. Children have their place in the Commonwealth of Virginia and may be naturally specified by one addressing the inhabitants of the state collectively. Just so, Paul believed that children have their place in a christian church, and he was naturally led to specify them among other classes of members.

According to ancient Jewish law, no Hebrew or member of the Jewish church, might contract a marriage with an alien Gentile. Such a marriage was void in law, from the beginning. The Hebrew husband or wife, was bound to repudiate his or her alien spouse; and the children of such a union were regarded as unclean

and alien, deriving their standing from the unbelieving and not from the believing parent.

Now, many cases occurred in every heathen community, in which the gospel was preached, in which either husband or wife was converted, while the other party remained a heathen. These questions then necessarily arose, does Jewish law apply here? Does this marriage become void by the unbelief of one party? Should the believing party repudiate the unbelieving party as unclean? Do the children, under the new dispensation, derive their position from the believing or unbelieving parent? Are they church members with the one, or aliens with the other? Precisely this case had occurred in the christian church of Corinth, most likely there were many instances, and the above innumerable questions had been sent up to Paul for his authoritative solution. His answer may be read in 1st Cor. 7: 12, 16, in which he declares that, under the christian dispensation, the marriage of believer and unbeliever is to be regarded binding, and that the children even of mixed marriages are to be regarded as in covenant with God, holy, that is, consecrated within the circle of communion, not unclean, that is not aliens, strangers to the covenant, excommunicate. So far then, from infants being excluded from the church under the new dispensation, the door is opened wider for them, in these two grand respects; 1st. Gentile parents may now by faith bring in their Gentile infants—Acts 2: 39, Gal. 3: 29—and 2d. The infant of one believing parent has a right to church covenant blessings, although the other parent is an unbeliever, the child now having the advantages of deriving his position from the believer, and not as before, under the law, being cast out with the unbeliever—1st Cor. 7: 14.

But did the Apostles actually baptize whole families, as soon as the heads of those families believed, and because of the faith of the head? Most assuredly they always did, and all the circumstances considered, the book of Acts is as conclusive a proof of the practice of infant baptism, as would be the similarly brief annals of any Pedo Baptist denomination that even existed.

Remember, that the book of Acts is not a full history of all the doings of the Apostles; on the contrary it consists of only a few fragmentary sketches—that it is not a record of a company of settled pastors, in an established church, training the young generations as they succeed in order; but the mere outline record of the rapid journeyings of foreign missionary Apostles, preaching the gospel as they pass over continents, ordaining elders in every city, and leaving to those ordinary officers of the church the duty of ordinary nurture and discipline. Every person in the least degree informed with regard to the nature of the work of foreign missiona-

ries, knows that such men, especially during their first years, are sent like Paul "not principally to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

Accordingly we find only eleven separate cases of baptism recorded in the Acts and Epistles. In the case of two of these, of Paul the Apostle and of the Ethiopian Eunuch, there were no children in existence, and of course none were baptized. In five of the cases, the record informs us of the baptism of large crowds, baptized on the spot, according to uniform Apostolic practice, after the simple presentation of the gospel, and immediately upon the profession of faith. Three thousand were thus baptized on the day of Pentecost—the people of Samaria—disciples of God at Ephesus—the many Corinthians—the company in the house of Cornelius. Now people never take their children into these large crowds; and these multitudes in question were baptized as soon as they first heard and believed. Any Pedo Baptist minister would have done precisely the same thing, and then in settling and organizing the church, he would gather and baptize in detail all the households of those whom he had at first admitted within the fold. And that is precisely what the Pedo Baptist Apostle Paul did, as we find by comparing the record in Acts of the "many Corinthians" when Stephanas was baptized, with the declaration of Paul in his Epistle, that he baptized the household of Stephanas. It is evident that the household were not baptized in the crowd, but that they were baptized afterwards on the ground of the faith of Stephanas, who believed and was baptized previously. The remaining three cases are those in which households are mentioned alone, Lydia of Thyatira, the Jailer of Philippi, and Crispus. The instances in which households are mentioned at all, are five—the households of Stephanas, of Lydia, of the Jailer, of Crispus and of Cornelius.

Now observe that there were only eleven cases of baptism mentioned at all, and yet in four instances the household is certainly, and in one other by implication, declared to be baptized with the head, or immediately after. Not only in a few cases therefore, but in *every* case where it was possible; in every case in which the household existed, the household was baptized. In every case, the fact that the head of the family believed, is set down, while nothing is said of the faith of the household. Every Pedo Baptist missionary would keep just such a record. Whenever a convert had a household, he would baptize the members of it. He would always mention the faith of the head—he would say nothing of the faith of his children. No Baptist missionary ever would, or could have written such a record. He never would baptize a household unless every individual so baptized was a believing adult. If he should indeed find such a family, he would

be careful to mention that all he baptized, believed. It is just as we supposed, as Paul acted, so Luke wrote after the present manner of Pedo Baptist christians.

I do verily believe then, that I have proved beyond all shadow of doubt, from the authoritative word of Jehovah, these fundamental points.

The visible church is designed to be a nursery and school into which infants are born and nurtured, as well as a company of professors of christian doctrine.

This visible church has existed from the Fall, as a necessary provision for the purpose of carrying out instrumentally all the promises of the Covenant of Grace; but it received its final and public form, as an aggregate of families through the Abrahamic covenant, in which the federal principle, including the child with the parent, is prominently recognized and perpetuated. This covenant, the Holy Ghost most distinctly and frequently assures us, passes over to us, is sure to us under the new dispensation; we are heirs of its blessings. Circumcision was the seal of that covenant, and as such, was applied to infants. The Holy Ghost plainly teaches us that baptism precisely takes the place of circumcision as the seal of that infant including covenant. They both signify the same grace; namely, *spiritual regeneration*; they both seal the same covenant; namely, the Abrahamic covenant, which dispenses the blessings of the Covenant of Grace under the federal constitution of the visible church—the house, the garden, the school, the family of God.

The scriptures also teach us, as plainly as they do any other truth touching our salvation, that this visible church of the Jewish age, which confessedly embraced infants, has not passed away, or been changed. We have not been built into a new church, but have been *added* to the old, *grafted* into the old Jewish stock; from which, for a season, most of the Jewish branches have been cut off.

The covenant remaining, includes infants.

The church remaining, includes infants.

Neither Christ nor his Apostles have dropped a single hint of the infants being cast out of their immemorial birth-right; on the contrary, Christ and his Apostles, *at all times*, speak and act in a way consistent only with the continuance of children within the circle of their ancient privileges.

The Apostle Peter addressed parents, telling them to come and receive the seal of the covenant, because the covenant held good to their children, and for Gentile as well as Jew.

The Apostle Paul addressed children as church members, and declared that the infant of even one believing parent is holy, or consecrated.

Christ declared that of infants the kingdom of heaven should in part consist. He commanded Peter to care for the lambs as well as the sheep of the flock over which he had been made overseer. He charged all his Apostles to disciple by baptizing and teaching "all nations," and as these nations consist of aggregates of families, the Apostles *in every case* did baptize the whole household upon the faith of the head, when he had a household to baptize.

Now, my friends, this is God's church. The question is not how this constitution commends itself to our reason or our fancy; this is, as a matter of fact, six thousand years old, God Almighty's sovereignly ordained constitution for his church. Upon those who ignorantly pluck up the foundations of God's church, we hope He will have mercy; but you who know better are bound by every principle of duty, of love, of self-interest, of compassion for your children in this age and country of fanatical radicalism, to defend with the severest jealousy the principles, and to fulfill with all your energies the duties of this federal infant embracing church of Christ.

VI. Finally, the immeasurable majority of God's people of all ages and nations, *from the beginning*, have held to the truth and permanence of this federal constitution of the church, and have practiced infant baptism.

We are certainly taught to call no man master, and we must base no article of faith upon human authority. Nevertheless, that man's pride is most insane who rejects as of no value in the way of confirming his own conclusions, the consenting judgment of the whole church through countless ages and nations, uniting in one interpretation of scripture. The people of God have been left to differ about many things, but until the last three hundred years, it is certain, that there was no public and general difference with regard to the plain command of Christ to include children within his earthly church.

After the death of the Apostle John, the church continued a poor scattered and persecuted community. Of the history of the doctrine and practices of this period, we of course, have but few and imperfect records. But even in the midst of such imperfect records, we have distinct testimony from witnesses, whose competency no man dare dispute, and who lived as near to the days of the Apostles as we do to the days of Washington's boyhood, and the old French war, that infant baptism was then a universal custom, and regarded as an Apostolic ordinance. All church historians, of every side of this question, admit the following facts. At the time of St. Augustine, born A. D. 354, the general prevalence of infant baptism is conceded by all. Augustine says, "The custom of our mother church in baptizing little children, is

by no means to be disregarded, nor accounted in any measure superfluous." He declares that this "doctrine is held by the whole church, not instituted by councils, but *always retained*." Origen was born in Egypt, of Christian parents, in A. D. 185, or eighty-five years after the death of the Apostle John, and was himself baptized in infancy. "He resided in Alexandria, in Cappadocia, in Palestine. He traveled in Italy, Greece and Arabia, and must have been in correspondence with the churches of every country." His testimony is "the usage of the church is that infants are to be baptized," "that the church has received the tradition of giving baptism to infants from the Apostles." Tertullian was born in Carthage, A. D. 160, and opposed infant baptism on the false ground that baptism is regeneration, and that sins committed after baptism cannot be removed; there remaining no other washing of regeneration by which they can be cleansed. Many following this idea of Tertullian, actually put off baptism until their dying hour. Nevertheless in his argument against early baptisms, he most evidently concedes that it is the universal custom; he fights against it as the *universal custom*. He never once denies that it is an Apostolic institution, or that it had continued without interruption from their days. Surely the learned and acute opponent of infant baptism, would have done so, if he could with truth. This brings us to within sixty years of the death of the Apostle John, and proves that infant baptism was then the custom of the church. No historian pretends that between the days of the Apostles and Tertullian there is the slightest shade of evidence, that infant baptism did not prevail, or that he can indicate the point of time during those sixty years when infant baptism was introduced. The very first existent testimony on the subject proves the universal prevalence of this rite. There it stands acknowledged by friend and foe to be universal within sixty years of the Apostles; and no man can go back of that, within those sixty years, and say here infant baptism *did not exist*; or here, and thus infant baptism began to be.

The ancient church split into several fragments; the Roman, Greek, Armenian, Nestorian and Abyssinian, all differing among themselves in many things, but all agreeing in understanding the scriptures as we understand them to include infants in the fold. This view has been uniform, among all people, all national churches, and all dissenting sects, up to the time of the Reformation, with exceptions so insignificant as to be of no weight, and so uncertain that their existence at all must ever be a matter of doubt. The Waldenses of Piedmont, the oldest living Protestants, who claim to have preserved the custom of the early church pure from the beginning, have been Pedo-Baptists beyond question, as far

back as record or tradition goes. The large majority of the Moravians, who sprang from John Huss in Moravia and Bohemia, were Pedo-Baptists, a minority, always small and soon absorbed, objected to infant baptism. Early in the 12th century Peter Bruys did object to infant baptism, but his followers, the Petro-brussians are heard of only for a short time. The proper Waldensese of France, have always, as far as *positive* testimony reaches, been Pedo-Baptists. It is beyond question, that at the date of the Reformation, the Moravians, the Waldensese of France and Piedmont, all, without exception or debate, entered into fullest fellowship with the Pedo-Baptist churches of Luther, Zwingle and Calvin. At that time assuredly all the Protestant sects of the middle ages were Pedo-Baptists. The present Baptists could not have sprung from them, for they were all on our side. History shuts the matter up to one only possible issue. The only Baptists of the time of the Reformation, were the Peasants of Germany—ignorant beyond our power now to measure, consisting of two very different parties—a fanatical radical party, engaged in insurrectionary wars, and a truly religious, though but little enlightened party, of whom Menno Simonis of Friesland became the principal teacher and leader about A. D. 1537. Thus although no man can put his finger upon the point of time in which infants *began* to be introduced into the christian church, we on the other hand, do now put our hand upon the point of time, one thousand five hundred years after Christ, when *first* a public church was organized upon the man-devised plan of turning infants out of their God-sanctioned heritage.

At the time of the Reformation, learned and holy men were raised up of God, in the midst of every European nation. Melanthon, it is true, learned from Luther, and John Knox from Calvin—and yet, there was a perfectly independent movement in several centres of reform, between which, there was no borrowing the one from the other. The church of Scotland differed much from the church of England, and both from the Lutheran church of Germany—and yet, amid all their differences in other respects, not one of the great churches of the Reformation put children out of that fold into which God had put and kept them by public and solemn charters and gracious providences, ever since the time of Abraham. There was the most entire independence, and in many respects great differences between Zwingle the Reformer of the Swiss, Luther the Reformer of the Germans, and Calvin the Reformer of the French—and yet, no prominent man of genius, learning and piety, in that age of theological giants, doubted the validity of the birthright of infants in the church of Christ. The conception of leading a crusade against the gospel rights of little babies,

did not originate with these. Men of another mettle altogether proposed and seek to achieve this victory.

The unbroken testimony of the universal church is at once most intelligibly and affectingly represented to us in the mute language of that long line of grave-yards, which reach back to the beginning, marking the resting place of each generation in its turn. Some tombstones from the Catacombs of Rome, bearing date within one hundred years of the Apostles have come down to us, telling us of infant church members, even so early laid to rest by tender mothers, in the confident hope of a glorious resurrection. “Eustafia, the mother, places this in commemoration of her son Polychromio, a faithful, who lived three years.” “Urcia Florentia a faithful, rests here in peace—she lived five years and eight months and eight days.” From that day to this every christian graveyard bears the like memorials of Christ’s redeemed and baptized lambs; and which father or mother of you will be the first to join the crusaders, and digging up the little ashes cast them out?

It may be well to inform you, in passing, that if you should judge of the proportion which the opponents of infant baptism sustain to other professors of christianity, by what you see immediately around you, you would be marvellously mistaken. This is a new question comparatively, partaking of the general radicalism so characteristic of this age and country. It is consequently principally an American question. There are twice as many deniers of infant baptism in America, as in all of Christendom besides. According to the best proximate computation, the proportion of Protestant christians denying infant baptism to those who maintain it, is in America, about as one to four and a half—in Europe about as one to twenty-nine.

Having reviewed thus rapidly the evidence establishing and confirming this great principle of God’s house—the testimony of God’s word, and the concurrent opinion of God’s people in all ages and nations—the question irresistably suggests itself, upon what ground do they rely, who have taken the fearful responsibility of turning infants out of their birth-right, and thus violating the foundations of God’s church?

They have in the wide world but two *positive* arguments, which we confess to be plausible on the surface, to look well before they are brought to the test, and therefore well calculated to make an impression upon those whose education is imperfect, or whose prejudices are inveterate. The first argument is from the nature of Baptism. Baptism presupposes faith—but infants can’t believe, therefore infants ought not to be baptized; exactly so, we answer, circumcision presupposed faith; it was the seal of that righteousness which Abraham had through faith, while he was

yet uncircumcised—but infants can't believe, therefore, infants ought not to be circumcised—but God commanded that they should, and as a matter of fact they were. Circumcision signified and sealed everything that baptism signifies and seals, and all the arguments of the Baptists against our doing the one, bear with the same force against God's commanding the other. Again, they argue, baptism is the seal of a covenant, but infants can't contract, therefore infants ought not to be baptized. We answer, infants can't, indeed, contract separately in their own persons, but God constantly in the scriptures did contract with infants, as embraced in and represented by their parents. See the case of Adam and his descendants, Noah and his descendants, Abraham and his seed, and Deut. 29: 10 and 11, "Ye stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers with all the men of Israel; *your little ones*, your wives, and the stranger, &c., that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God and into his oath" Infants are included in the Covenant, Baptism is the sign of grace, and the seal of the Covenant, and therefore rightly applied to the infants already included. Their first argument, therefore, proves nothing at all when its sense is examined; and, if it did, it would bear against God, rather than against us.

The second argument is the terms of the commission which our Lord gave to his disciples, recorded in Mark 16: 15, 16, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Dr. Alexander Carson, the greatest Baptist champion, says: "I am willing to hang the whole controversy on this passage. I will risk the credit of my understanding on my success in showing that according to this commission, believers only are to be baptized"—page 169—"Here I stand entrenched and I defy the ingenuity of earth and hell to drive me from my position." Dr. Carson is really a very able man, yet if this was the only investment of his understanding he had ever made, he assuredly would have been bankrupt in that respect, beyond all retrieve. He is "willing to hang the whole controversy on this passage," and we also think that a one-sided theory like his can more easily be shown to be consistent with one text, than with the whole Bible. We, on the contrary, rest our more perfect view of christian baptism upon all the passages, this one in Mark with the rest, which express our Master's will on the subject. It is plain that Christ does not teach infant baptism in this passage. If this was the only passage in which the mind of Christ touching this matter was expressed, we would not believe in infant baptism any more than Dr. Carson does. But on the other hand, this passage

says nothing against infant baptism, which I have abundantly established by other passages; this passage says nothing about infant baptism at all.

The two passages which are commonly regarded as recording the institution by Christ of the ordinance of Christian Baptism, are Matt. 28: 19, and Mark 16: 15, 16. Each of these passages must of course be literally interpreted by itself, and nothing more can be determined from them than the words plainly teach. They must be interpreted also, in the light of their historical connection, and in view of all that the scriptures elsewhere teach of baptism, its significance and its relations. Baptism was not a new thing, as a religious rite. The Jews, from time immemorial, had observed divers baptisms. John the forerunner had come baptising. The disciples of Christ themselves, as we know from John 4: 2, before this had practised baptism, as they had previously been sent forth to preach, Mark 3: 13, 14, and Matt. 10: 5, 7. Our Saviour's words in these passages certainly do not include *all* on the subject of this ordinance which he designed his Apostles to know. His design in these words is plainly, only and simply to convey what the words mean. They had already preached, He now tells them that they were always to continue preaching to the end of the world (present dispensation.) They had before preached only to Jews—they were now to preach to every creature, Gentile as well as Jew. They had before preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand—they were now to preach the gospel, or glad news of the finished salvation. They had before baptized also, He now tells them that baptism is to continue an ordinance of perpetual obligation in his house. They had before baptized only Jews—they were now to baptize all nations. They had before baptized unto repentance—they were now to baptize into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Now let us proceed to the question of the simple plain meaning of the words of these two passages. Matt. 28: 19, "Go ye therefore, and disciple (make disciples, &c., Carson adopts this translation as well as we) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." To disciple, is to make disciples of. That is to be done, Christ says, by first baptizing then teaching. The grammatical construction plainly signifies this and nothing else. This is the precise course the Apostles always followed in every case, as on the day of Pentacost, immediately baptizing those adults which are convinced of the truth of their message, after a single proclamation of it, and afterwards teaching them continuously all things what-

soever, of doctrine or of practice, Jesus had commanded. The church is the school of Christ; to disciple is to bring into that school; baptism is the rite of initiation, and learning is the great occupation of its members. The commission reads, bring *all nations* into this school, baptizing them, then teaching them. Nations are made up of families; families include infants; infants are given us to be taught Christ's word—to receive the nurture of Christ's house—all churches, Baptist churches as well as others, grow by teaching their infants. I do honestly think, as if on oath, that this passage does not say anything inconsistent with infant baptism, which I have clearly proved to be taught elsewhere.

Mark 16: 15, 16, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Dr. Carson insists, 1st. That this passage was designed by Christ to teach the *conditions of Baptism*. I, on the contrary, insist that the words are plainly not intended to teach one iota on the subject of the conditions of *Baptism*. Christ, with as single a purpose as any speaker ever had, simply tells his Apostles the conditions of *salvation*, which they are to proclaim. The conditions of salvation he declares to be, faith and baptism, and one of these conditions is so essential, that where it is finally wanting the person will be lost. As this is a proclamation, it can refer to those only to whom the proclamation comes, that is adults. 2d. Dr. Carson insists in the second place, that this passage declaring the conditions of baptism, expressly confines baptism to believers. On the contrary, I insist, that even if Christ was here speaking of the conditions of baptism, which he is not, it would not follow that he excludes infants, because he is speaking only in reference to adults. Either he includes infants in his proposition or he does not. If he is speaking only of adults, to whom alone the proclamation comes, and to whom alone therefore the warning can apply—it is plain that he is saying nothing about infants. If he is saying nothing about infants, he cannot be denying infant baptism—which is, therefore, left just where it was before, abundantly established by other scriptures. If his proposition does include infants, then our precious Lord Jesus is saying, "He, adult or infant that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he, adult or infant that believeth not, shall be damned." If infants can believe, according to this, they ought to be baptized; if infants cannot believe, according to this, they must be damned. Surely no christian will accept this horrible alternative. But what other is there? Is it not plain that this one lone, and so vainly boasted Bible argument against infant baptism altogether fails?

Dr. Carson has exhibited great learning and ability in other

parts of his book, but on this one point on which he stakes the whole controversy, and his own reputation, he furnishes nothing but empty assertion energetically pronounced. No man, it is certain, could do better, than this greatest of all Baptist champions. It is no less certain that he did his best—it appears evident, therefore, that on his side of the question, there was nothing better to do.

Infants are saved, regenerated and sanctified, and they are saved by the very same gracious merit and power by which adults are saved. There is but one salvation for adult and infant alike. The adult is regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Ghost taking of the things of Christ, and applying it to their souls through the instrumentality of the truth known and believed. The infant is regenerated and sanctified by the same Holy Spirit, taking of the same things of Christ and applying it unto them without the instrumentality of the truth, known or believed. But the virtue does not reside in the truth, which is the instrument, but in the Spirit of God, and the merit and grace of Christ. This Spirit, this merit, this grace, are the same in the case of the infant, and the adult. Baptism symbolizes the out-pouring of this spirit and the communication of this grace. As infants do have part in the same salvation as adults, so God has given them to have part in the same baptism. There is no more, or other mystery in the regeneration of an infant, than in the regeneration of an adult; each is an act of "new creation," and no man can understand either.

Dr. Carson personally believes that infants will be saved, but he denies that infants are saved by the gospel. "The salvation of the gospel is as much confined to adults as the baptism of the gospel is. None can ever be saved by the gospel, that does not believe it, consequently by the gospel no infant can be saved." "We know nothing of the means whereby God receives infants, nor have we any business with it"—Carson on Baptism, page 173. Fathers and mothers, mark this well, for it naturally, necessarily springs from the arguments and the spirit that deny infant baptism. Are there two salvoes, one by the gospel, clearly revealed for you; another, all unknown, with which you have no business, for your babe? Is not the gospel the proclamation of the one only possible salvation? What can you know of that salvation, or what dare you imagine of that salvation, more than the proclamation of it, that is the gospel, reveals? What virtue is there in the mere proclamation, except that which belongs to the salvation it conveys? The gospel assuredly is the only revelation of salvation which has authority from God; every other salvation must be alike *unknown* and *unauthorized*. Will you give your babies up to that? All outside of gospel salvation is in the unrelieved darkness which covered the whole world before Revelation from heaven shed its relieving

ray. When your child dies, according to this argument, you can do no better than send the little nursing's spirit out into the great darkness, at a peradventure for eternity, without promise or gospel, attempting to comfort yourself, if you can, with the words of the greatest Baptist champion that ever lived, "By the gospel no infant can be saved; we know nothing of the means whereby God receives infants, nor have we any business with it." An argument which leads to such consequences, and a cause which engenders such a spirit, is not of God. We unfeignedly respect Dr. Carson's piety and genius, as truly eminent, but by so much the greater is our horror at the consequences of his doctrine.

It has been publicly charged that Pedo-Baptist churches do not know what to do with infants, after they have baptized them. The Pedo-Baptist testimonies on this subject are known to all, and they fully prove that assertion to be false. It would take up too much space here to quote the whole testimony at large, but all know that the Episcopal Prayer Book, the Methodist Discipline, the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, alike declare that infants of believers are born within the provisions of the covenant, and are members of the church—that by baptism they are publicly acknowledged and sealed in that church status and those gracious privileges; that they consequently have a right to church nurture, instruction, example, prayer and discipline, and when they come to years of discretion, if they are then, through grace, able to discern the Lord's body, a right to come to the Lord's table. Larger Catechism Questions, 171 and 172, and Directory for Worship, chapters 8 and 9. I intend now, therefore, in conclusion, to state as briefly as I can, the scriptural view of the significance and benefits of Infant Baptism, the nature and limits of Infant Church Membership, and thence merely hint at the responsibilities resting upon church officers, parents and baptized children.

Infants are capable of regeneration and sanctification—this is a Bible doctrine, and we have experience in actual life, of some favoured ones, who, beyond question, were like John the Baptist, sanctified from the mother's womb. We believe that all infants who die in infancy, are so regenerated by the Holy Ghost. To all such regenerate infants, known as they are, only to the heart-searching God, the grace signified by baptism, is in the application of that sacrament, not only offered, but really conferred by the Holy Ghost—Confession of Faith, chapter 28. Experience however proves that the large majority are not regenerate in infancy, whether they have been baptized or not. And yet, it never follows that the covenant sealed by baptism in their case has failed. They have been born and nurtured in the household of faith, and their baptism has sealed to them all the benefits and obligations of the

covenant, to take effect the instant they believe. They have been brought nearer than any others to the blessing; they yet enjoy all the means of the visible church; their consciences are bound by the federal obligations assumed by their parents acting in their name, and they are in precisely that position, and sustain those relations which the scriptures and experience prove to be God's ordinary means of saving souls.

In every baptism of an infant there are present three persons interested, God, the parent and the child. Each of these three are involved in the covenant, while only two of the parties, God and the parent are directly and personally contracting. God promises, on the condition of the parent's faithfulness in discharge of all of the obligations which he assumes, that the child shall be placed in the best possible circumstances for his spiritual prosperity, and that as a general law, the parent's faithfulness shall be blessed in securing instrumentally, the faithfulness of the child. I say, as a general law, for we are speaking of moral and spiritual and not mechanical relations; and, otherwise, the child would not be treated as a free moral agent at all, if his salvation was *necessarily* secured by the faithfulness of the parent. On his part, the parent promises two distinct things—

1st. The parent believingly recognizes the precious covenant of salvation, as offered, not for himself alone, but inclusively for his child with himself. He, therefore, cordially accepts it in the exercise of spiritual faith for himself and his child; and as constituted by God, the federal head and representative of his child, he solemnly promises in its behalf, binding it to exercise faith and yield obedience as soon as it becomes a free, responsible agent.

2d. The parent, in the second place, recognizes his own responsibilities as the divinely constituted guardian and educator of his child; that his own faith and spiritual life is the real basis of his child's covenant relation to God; and that, therefore, the benefits of the covenant must accrue to the child, mainly through him. He, therefore, solemnly promises for himself, that he will live near to God for his children's sake; that he will faithfully in dependence upon assisting grace, teach it the truths of the gospel, its own covenanted privileges as an infant church member; that he will set before it a christian example, surround it with holy influences, constantly go with and for it, to the throne of grace—in short, to use in its behalf, all scriptural means, and invoke upon it all spiritual blessings.

As the child grows to be capable of knowing, loving and obeying the truth, the responsibilities assumed at its baptism pass over, from the parent to the child. Now, as an intelligent, moral agent,

he is fully bound by all the obligations of the baptismal vows; not because he consciously took them himself, but because under God's constitution they were assumed for and bound upon him by his divinely ordained representatives. If the parent is really wisely faithful, the scriptures and experience assure us that the child will, as a rule, accept and fulfill those vows when they become his. God is always faithful. The benefits of the covenant are always fully realized, except where His promise is rendered void by the wicked opposition or neglect, either of the parent or the child.

This baptism, as I have before asserted, does not confer these covenanted privileges and obligations upon either the parent or his child; it only acknowledges and sacramentally seals those which began to exist by divine constitution, the instant of the infant's birth. He is born a member of a Christian family in covenant with God. The visible church consists of such christian covenanted families, and consequently the infant is born a member of the visible church. The peculiar privileges secured to him by that covenant, of which his baptism is the seal, consist in the precious means of grace afforded by the spiritual influences of the christian family and christian church. Instead of being cast into the world as an alien, he is born into the school of Christ, the nursery of heaven, an object of peculiar divine regard. The church of Christ is the place of his nativity, from birth his home. The teaching, the example, the prayers, the discipline of the church, are all his. The fathers of the church are his fathers; its history is his heritage; its glorious traditions, associations, trophies, immunities, liberties, promises, prophecies and prospects, are all his. What on a lower ground American citizenship is to the American child, that, and infinitely more on a higher ground is church-membership to the children of the covenant; fellow-citizens, are they with the saints, and of the household of faith. Many have reached this blessed position only by great labor and sacrifices, and by a great price of toil purchased this freedom, but our infants are free-born. They inherit by birth the dignities, privileges and responsibilities of God's household.

It must be remembered, however, that in the Christian church, as in every other organized society, different privileges demand different qualifications. Every freeborn member of the civil community is a citizen, and has a right to many of the privileges of citizenship; but every citizen has not a right to *all* the privileges of citizenship. Every citizen has not a right to vote, and every voter has not the qualifications for office. This, in every society, depends upon the special provisions of the constitution of such society, and upon the special nature of the privilege in question.

Just so every church member is not qualified to partake of the communion—only those who enjoy a comfortable evidence that they have passed from death unto life, and that through grace they are able to discern the Lord's body. And every communicant has not the qualifications for office in the church. These spiritual qualifications are the gifts of that divine Spirit which gives unto every man severally as He wills, and they should be prayerfully sought from Him.

It is the bounden duty of every person baptized in infancy to consecrate to God his whole soul and body, the moment he comes to understanding and moral accountability. He does not belong to the world—he belongs to God from his birth. If the baptized man does not serve Christ, he is not a common sinner like others. His baptism sticks to him, and marks him wherever he flies, as a different sinner from the aliens with whom he associates; as not only a reprobate, but an *apostate*. And as soon as the baptized man does give his heart to Christ, it is his privilege to come forward and join the inner circle of the communicants. He does not then join the church, he was born in it—but now when his heart is changed he wakes up to his responsibilities and privileges as a church-member, and comes forward in dependence upon a promised grace to fulfill the obligations, and to enjoy the privileges he has before neglected. The phrase, *joining the church*, applied to a person already a member of that church by birth and baptism, when he comes forward to the communion, belongs to those who deny infant baptism. It is not only significant of a falsehood, its use works most mischievously in their favour and against the truth, and therefore, Pedo-Baptist friends, of all denominations, it ought by all means to be discontinued, *at once and forever*.

Many blasphemously sneer at "baby sprinkling," God's ordinance, and sillily use that sneer as an argument against us, as if we, or any of God's people from the beginning ever believed that the virtue resides in the water. Infant Baptism is just what adult baptism is, a visible sign of an invisible grace. The sign is not the grace, it only represents, and by God's authority seals it. The benefits of infant baptism are *not* then the benefits of sprinkling with water, but the glorious benefits of the child's place in the covenant and the church, which the baptism signs and seals.

The history of the church is the history of these benefits. Look around you—look behind you in the reminiscences of your past life—gather together all the testimonials of experience, and see if God's promises for the children have been without benefit. I assert, on the contrary, that where the parents have been *wisely*

faithful, a covenanted child's dying without hope is a singular exception. All our communions are, without question, recruited in far the largest part by the children of christian parents. We have all seen the eminent piety of one generation bearing fruit in the prevalence of piety in many succeeding generations of descendants. We have all seen whole communities, and regions of country preserve the unmistakable marks of God's covenanting graciously with their fathers and founders. God does graciously bring into all our churches, some from the great world, who, like the heathen, have been aliens and strangers from their birth. But, I fear not to challenge the general and average experience of any denomination, in proof of my assertion, that the majority of those brought to Christ in long-settled christian communities, are brought by means of those benefits which are the common heritage of the infant children of believers.

But it may be asked, does not the same experience characterize Baptist as well as Pedo-Baptist churches? Answer. To be sure it does, though in a less degree. They, too, are honest, though imperfect believers in Christ, and therefore, even though unconsciously, heirs of the benefits of that covenant upon which He has founded his church, whether they will or not. If they are sincere, even their ignorance and consequent disobedience of a specific command cannot entirely deprive them of the blessings of their Father's house, however sorely it may cripple them. If a Quaker is a true believer, his mistake with regard to the binding obligation of the observance of the Lord's supper cannot cut him entirely off from Christ; no more does the Baptist's mistake with regard to infant baptism cut off all the blessings of God from his household.

Is it asked, why then the necessity of baptizing infants, if those who reject that ordinance may reap all the blessings it is claimed to secure? If this argument were good, so also, would be the corresponding one of the Quaker, why is it necessary either to baptize or receive the communion if I enjoy the merits of Christ and the comfort of the Holy Ghost without observing either. The sufficient answer in both cases is, that the benefit contended for does not reside in the mere baptism, whether applied to infant or adult, but in the covenanted privileges and blessings of which the sacrament is the seal; and yet that Christ commands the seal. And again, that the benefit will always be most largely experienced where we most intelligently expect it in the channel in which God has appointed that it shall flow, and most faithfully observe all of the conditions of its bestowment which he imposes upon us. While then we admit that the blessings of the infant-including covenant are largely experienced by truly Christian Baptists, who, through ignorance deny

it, experience will abundantly prove that its benefits are the most richly experienced just in exact proportion as the principles of the covenant are intelligently understood and its obligations faithfully and prayerfully fulfilled.

For it is evident that while our views of duty and privilege are inadequate, our practical performance of duty must be still more defective. In all of our Pedo-Baptist churches, also, there is a great deal of inadequate thinking and feeling on this most important subject. Our principles need to be more luminously unfolded, and our duties more regularly enforced. Remember that even where pastors and people do maintain steadily clear views of these fundamental principles, how much shortcoming is there in practice. How partial is our religious instruction of our children—how imperfect our example—how cold our prayers.

Do not pastors come dreadfully short, in exhibiting to baptized children the precious privileges—the awful responsibilities of their position? Do not elders neglect to fill out prayerfully and laboriously all the rightful offices of spiritual culture and guardianship over the lambs of that flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers? Do not all parents come short in their part of domestic religious training and discipline? And even in these cases, where we both know our covenant obligations and are zealous to perform them, how often are the effects all spoiled by the want of practical wisdom in the manner in which we work? How many zealous parents, with good intentions, ruin their children by want of prudence or rational tact, alienating their hearts by want of tenderness, on the one hand, or spoiling them for want of authority on the other; or who counteract excellent precepts by bad examples? And how often does one ungodly parent's influence bear directly against and so counteract that of the other?

When all of this ignorance and unfaithfulness, and want of practical prudence is considered, would not God be clear from the charge of unfaithfulness to His Covenant, even if none of our children were saved? Is it not beyond adequate admiration a miracle of grace that so large a part are, as a matter of fact, brought home at last? O! behold how our Heavenly Father glorifies Himself with grace; so multiplying the multitudes of His tender mercies over all of our prevailing unfaithfulness and miserable misunderstandings.

Committing this subject to your continued study in the light of the unerring oracles of God, and to your intelligent observation of His gracious providence toward the Flock of the Covenant, I close by inviting you to join with me in fervently giving thanks

and glory to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for all the benefits we have so richly experienced in the Covenant guaranteeing Infant Church Membership.

Infant Baptism

UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY



3 2146 00530 0531